

Women in Customs Capacity Building

Final Report

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Data Page

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Abstract

The main purposes of the Women in Customs network within Jordan's Customs Department is to 1) promote its members' involvement in the department activities; 2) achieve better performance by the department personnel in dealing with both genders; 3) give members equal opportunities for advancement; 4) introduce new ways to enhance members' careers; and 5) encourage the removal of unfair obstacles to advancement.

The Customs Reform and Modernization Subcomponent of the AMIR Program will continue to support a "Women in Customs" group that was introduced in 2003 with emphasis on the practical need for an increased number of female customs officers in the work force. For example, customs needs female officers in all locations for passenger processing of women, and in locations having access to cargo under customs control to conduct personal examinations. While the limited work of the AMIR Program is not intended as a gender equity program, as women in customs gain a broader base in experience they will be qualified for more supervisory and managerial positions.

Table of Contents

Data Page	iii
Abstract	iv
Table of Contents	v
Executive Summary	vi
1. Background	1
2. Objectives	1
3. Findings and Observations.....	2
3.1 Training.....	4
3.2 Expected Risks and Job Constraints.....	4
4. Conclusion	5
Appendix 1: Women in Customs Questionnaire	6
Appendix 2: SOW	7

Executive Summary

The purpose of the Women in Customs network within the Jordan Customs Department (JCD) is to propose a way forward to develop the role of women in achieving best practices of JCD objectives especially when dealing with women clients on the work site. It is also aimed at enhancing women's career opportunities and tackling obstacles that hinder them from achieving that purpose. Another goal is to promote the concept of identifying people (men or women) who possess or can acquire the key competencies of:

- Analysis, decision-making and taking responsibility;
- Team work
- Effective communication

Socialization of individuals into gender roles is a process by which genders assume different personality characteristics, preferences, and skills. The education of all parties will eventually lead to successful release from the constraints imposed by culture. As social institutions change, we must learn to change gender role expectations. The issues of gender equality are not well developed in the JCD to the point of negative impact on the ability of the JCD to effectively carry out its mandates.

Changes have started in the JCD by the formation of a Women in Customs network within the organization but the active support of this group is lacking equally from the women themselves and from their male counterparts.

Recommendation: Ensuring that women in the JCD are equipped to do the job and develop their individual potential will require affirmative action. The JCD must develop such a program to bring up both the capacity of women with the JCD ranks and as a recruitment factor in the future.

Recommendation: Develop contacts with other regional countries with more enhanced women participation in customs agencies, such as Tunisia and Morocco as regional examples.

Recommendation: During off-peak hours and in the case of personal emergencies, provide vehicles for transport back to Amman from Queen Alia Airport cargo and passenger processing areas, due to the far distance of these two sites from the transportation services and Amman. This could be a great incentive to both women and men customs officers on these sites.

Recommendation: Increase the participation of women in available training workshops.

Recommendation: Secure forthcoming commitment from senior management to support women in the JCD by issuing a formal management statement.

1. Background

The full participation of both men and women in policy-making, traditionally male-dominated environments, and management may be impeded by cultural and legal constraints that limit the participation of women, and by their relative lack of time and mobility due to their workload and multiple roles. If participatory development is to benefit from the contributions of women, and meet their particular needs, a range of strategic and practical measures must be taken to overcome these barriers.

Experience in participatory development has made clear that, unless specific steps are taken to ensure the full participation of men and women, women are very often excluded. As a result, specific job areas where women's presence is essential fail to benefit from women's contributions and fail to meet the particular needs and interests of women. As an example, women enhance the risk assessments as women can introduce different perspectives on situations, adopt different approaches, and may therefore initiate a more holistic view of the risks involved in a work environment such as the customs field.

Change requires continuous redefinition of our self-image relative to our roles as well as the role expectations we have of others. Women and men are still often typecast in their placement into careers as well as their development of career aspirations. In the long run, the equal participation of men and women depends on strategic measures, policy and institutional changes, to tackle the root causes of gender inequalities and remove the constraints to women's involvement.

2. Objectives

The objective of this consultancy was to develop the skills of women JCD customs officers. It is important to enhance women's role and performance with in the JDC to achieve best implementations of customs performance. The JDC must encourage women to take such positions, especially at border sites.

Traditional gender-role stereotypes place women in restricted roles as they could often be judged by gender-role traits such as social skills, and "knowing their place" rather than ability, talent and potential. Women are often accused of capitalizing on their sex rather than abilities. Gender role stereotyping will diminish in the workplace as women willingly forfeit the need for male approval and men learn to value the abilities and contributions of women.

In order to achieve the general workplace skills needed for all posts in border and inland customs, experience of working with the public, particularly in confrontational situations is important and could be developed by:

- Communication and
- Teamwork.

3. Findings and Observations

To identify the overall attitude and begin with promoting women in customs, the AMIR Program sponsored a general meeting of women in JCD. The meeting entitled ‘Women in Customs Network’ was held on July 23, 2003 at the Customs Training Center with the attendance of 20 women working in the Jordan Customs Department in different fields.

Attending the meeting from the AMIR Program were:

- Walter Hekala, CRM Subcomponent Manager
- John Knott, AMIR consultant
- Lina Arafat, CRM Customs Liaison

The main purposes of the meeting were to discuss the idea of the network for the Women within JCD, generate discussions on the current status of women participation, and propose a way forward to develop the network and their involvement in the JCD to achieve equal opportunities as their men colleagues.

Several issues and concerns were expressed during the meeting such as:

- Senior management will not support the concept of a Women in Customs network.
- It was the first time an initiative was taken considering women in customs
- There is a limit to the level of seniority a woman can achieve within the department.
- Experience at the borders is not available for women, which limits their access to promotion.
- There are no facilities for women in most JDC Customs centers including cargo at the airport.
- There is a perception by the women of a clear discrimination against them.
- Conditions at borders are such that women could not transfer to these locations as a customs officer.
- Women should be given the same opportunities as men to develop their career (i.e. to be given six month to demonstrate abilities).
- The decision for promotion comes from a committee of which all members are men.
- There is no process to get feedback from clients on the performance of women in the JCD.

Towards the end of the meeting a committee was formed to represent the whole group in future meetings:

- Somaya Wahoush, IT Director
- Basema Malkawi, Chief of Section
- Haya Habahbeh, Deputy of Control Director
- Eman Bawaieh, Human Resources
- Essmat Shayyab, International Cooperation and Planning Department
- Khloud Habaibeh, Head of Operation Section

The committee is to handle organization of future work and develop a preliminary strategy to enhance the involvement of women customs officers.

The Second Women in Customs Network meeting was held on August 3, 2003 at the Customs Department with the nominated committee at the Customs HQ Attended by:

- Somaya Wahoush, IT Director
- Basema Malkawi, Chief of Section
- Haya Habahbeh, Deputy of Control Director
- Khloud Habaibeh, Head of Operation Section

From AMIR Program:

- Lina Arafat

The main purpose of the meeting was to follow up on the points discussed during the first meeting and to set a working plan and points for presentation to the director general. During this meeting the committee identified five customs sites where women customs officers could work onsite if facilities are improved for women to be present with the least costs and easiest preparations. These identified sites are:

- 1- Queen Alia International Airport
- 2- Cargo Section at Queen Alia Airport
- 3- Marka Airport passenger's services
- 4- Amman Customs Center
- 5- Zarqa Customs Center

On August 26, 2003 two of the identified sites were visited by two members of the committee, Basema Malkawi and Essmat Shiyab as well as Lina Arafat from the AMIR Program. The following notes were the finding of the visit and were reported to the committee:

1- Queen Alia Airport passenger services: It is fully equipped for women customs officers with very good facilities and environment. The committee would like to request to increase the number of women customs officers appointed at the airport, willing to accept the duty shifts system, especially for those women who live near by the area.

2- Cargo section at Queen Alia Airport: upon the inspection visit and meeting with the director there, the following points were recommended:

- a) Work space and conditions are good and there is a need of extra staff due to work load and it would be recommended to have women present there since no women are already enrolled among the staff.
- b) Facilities for women such as bathrooms could be shared with the women staff of the Royal Jordanian Airlines on the same floor of the same building.
- c) A cafeteria is available for the staff which provides meals at low cost.

- d) Transportation to/from the site is available for staff at two main stations in Amman.
- e) In case of emergency and there is a need for a staff member to take leave of work and return back to Amman, buses are available to the bus station in Amman at low rate for the amount of JD.0500.

Overall good conditions exist for including women officers at the airport cargo facilities.

Based on agreement from representatives of the Women in Customs Network, the first step towards incorporating gender issues in the policy-making process, and determining appropriate measures for strengthening women's participation is to obtain good information on gender roles, existing positions within the JCD, and the constraints operating against women's participation through a combination of quantitative surveys and qualitative social assessments. To be effective, assessments must be designed specifically to elicit the views of women. A questionnaire was distributed among the women at the JCD expressing their views on the flexibility within the department regarding the concerns of women working in the JCD. The results are presented in Appendix 1.

3.1 Training

The Women in Customs Network meeting also resulted in the identification of a good opportunity to market the role of women. This would be done by increasing the number of women participating in training opportunities offered. Given budget constraints; training workshops could be initially provided during those already scheduled by the AMIR Program or other donor organizations. Increasing the number of women participating in these workshops can be as an initial step.

3.2 Expected Risks and Job Constraints

Significant role conflicts between workplace requirements and caretaker responsibilities are experienced by most employed women. Comments of this nature reshuffle the blame for career obstacles back to women rather than examine individual and organizational policies and practices that could lead to constructive changes in formal and informal organizational policies and practices.

It is acknowledged that it will be difficult to achieve the objectives of the Women in Customs initiative in a short time frame and as smooth as hoped. There remain expected risks and job constraints that exist. Some of the main difficulties facing this process are:

- Women in Customs Department are disorganized and new to this initiative.
- Dealing with a male dominant culture within the JCD.
- Stereotypes perceived by the women themselves of the kind of public to be dealt with which discourages women to apply for field positions.

- The lack of women who have worked in the outlying field offices limits the role models for other women to accept these positions. Lack of required experience limits the ability of the women to break the barrier into field work. It is the responsibility of women themselves to actually overcome their tendency to be reluctant in accepting field position
- Family commitments and flexibility with the JCD, such as support offered through child-care facilities are currently lacking.
- Women have difficulty managing stress, pressure, over-time, and travel away from home.
- Women have a higher turnover rate and a higher absenteeism rate than men.

4. Conclusion

If we are to have more involvement of women within the JCD, changes in career counseling, training, and job placement require both men and women to move beyond traditional role concepts. Two main changes are important factors to overcome in order to achieve significant changes: (a) Women themselves feel inadequate and have poor self-image, which psychologically handicap them from taking steps to increase their numbers in the career path steps required for advancement; and (b) male stereotyping of the role of women in organizations, which underutilizes female talents or misuses the skills and competencies of women. Each of these constraints requires massive reeducation and attitude change.

Annex 1

Total number of questionnaires collected is 51

		% Agree	% Disagree
1	The Customs Department provides opportunity for women employees to develop their knowledge and skills through exposition to other experience of fellow employees on the internal and external levels.	30	70
2	Expositions to other experiences is available to all women employees effectively and fairly	20	80
3	All women employees in the Department are aware of the national goals which the Department contribute to completely or partially	20	80
4	The Department provides the place, time and motivation for women employees to participate in available experiences and knowledge	40	60
5	The Department provides to women employees all incentives to adapt effectively with changes in work environment	20	80
6	There is an effective mechanism adopted by the Department to transfer experiences of women employees to new employees as job relocations	10	90
7	The lack of adequate persuasion of the higher administration of the women employees role and its effectiveness in practicing assigned tasks is considered as one of the obstacles in developing the role of women employees in the Department	60	40
8	Your own experiences at your work course affects your work path and performance	66	33
9	The education degree is considered as one of the main obstacles which limits your job progress	45	55
10	Dealing with the public is an obstacle which prevents you from working at Customs Centers	40	60
11	The Department provides external opportunities for women employees to compete freely with men employees	21	78
12	Would you accept working at a Customs Center that is fully equipped with facilities for women employees	50	50

Other suggestions:

1. Provide opportunities to participate in workshops in and outside Jordan: 24%
2. Make a nursery at the Department: 33%
3. Women to be considered for vacancies available in the Department / Have same opportunity as men: 25%
4. To participate in making decisions and attending higher administration meetings: 13%

Annex 2

Annex B Staff Assignment Scope of Work

Activity Name: 555.1 Customs Reform and Modernization

SOW Title: Women in Customs capacity building

I. Specific Challenges to Be Addressed by this Consultancy

Jordan has made significant strides in customs modernization over the past few years. Despite this progress, there is still considerable work ahead for customs to transform itself into a modern organization based on international best practices. The JCD is responsible for ensuring compliance with customs regulations, including the management of the operational interface with their respective agency partners in the Jordan Civil Service.

The main purpose of the Women's Network within JCD, is to propose a way forward for developing the network and their involvement in the JCD to achieve equal opportunities as their men colleagues. Also introduce ways to enhance their career opportunities and tackle obstacles hindering them from achieving that purpose.

This SOW is designed to strengthen means of establishing the network. It is important to develop a work plan that will eventually reach the aimed results.

This SOW will ensure there is an effective plan in place and it will promote an appropriate and effective involvement of the Women in customs to contribute to the overall body of Customs.

II. Objective of this Consultancy

The objective is to develop a women involvement within customs by providing skilled officers, a methodology and suitable processes, procedures etc. through training course and practical exercises.

III. Specific Tasks of the Consultant

Under this Scope of Work, the Consultant shall perform, but not be limited to, the specific tasks specified under the following categories:

- A. Background Reading Related to Understanding the Work and Its Context.** The Consultant shall read, but is not limited to, the following materials related to fully understanding the work specified under this consultancy:

1. AMIR Technical Proposal.
2. AMIR 1.0 Final Report.
3. Customs Department Strategic Plan: 2001-2003.
4. Development and Integration of Customs Reform and Modernization within Jordan 2002 Final Report, February 2003. Prepared for AMIR Program by Glenn Wood

B. Background Interviews Related to Understanding the Work and Its Context.

The Consultant shall interview, but is not limited to, the following individuals or groups of individuals in order to fully understand the work specified under this consultancy:

- Greta Boye, PSPI Team Leader/AMIR Program
- Walter Hekala, CRM Manager, PSPI/AMIR Program
- Jamal Olaimat, Customs Specialist, PSPI/AMIR Program
- Lina Arafat, Customs Projects Coordinator, PSPI/AMIR Program
- All relevant Customs Directors including:
 - Director Planning & Organization
 - Intelligence Unit Director,
 - Director Risk Management
 - Director Control and Audit

C. Tasks Related to Accomplishing the Consultancy's Objectives. The Consultant shall use his/her education, considerable experience and additional understanding gleaned from the tasks specified in A. and B. above to:

- Review the existing women participation within the JCD and level of representations and make recommendations for the improvement of their role.
- Designing training courses to develop individual potential , taking into account the skills and experience of the officers, customs legislation, policy and procedures.
- Delivering the training course on team members who are equipped to do the job and establish business requirements.
- Provide advice on the continuation of the network by including recommendations on taking appropriate actions to promote more active involvement equal to their men colleagues.

The substance of, findings on, and recommendations with respect to the above mentioned tasks shall be delivered by consultant in a written report.